

The Prophet Jeremiah

by H.J. Vine

H.J. Vine's sermon on Jeremiah emphasizes the prophet's role in exalting the Lord and the relevance of his message for today's believers amidst moral decline.

Scripture: Jeremiah 9:23

Topics: "New Covenant", "Exaltation of the Lord"

Description

H.J. Vine emphasizes the significance of the Book of Jeremiah, highlighting its relevance for contemporary believers as a source of encouragement and spiritual sustenance amidst a world drifting from God's truth. He underscores that Jeremiah's name, meaning 'Exaltation of the Lord,' encapsulates the prophet's mission to glorify God, even in times of national despair. Vine draws parallels between Jeremiah and the New Testament, illustrating how both prophets call for repentance and highlight God's faithfulness despite human failure. The sermon encourages believers to recognize the importance of the New Covenant and the enduring hope found in Christ, who fulfills the promises made through Jeremiah. Ultimately, Vine calls for a diligent pursuit of understanding God's Word and a commitment to glorifying Him in all aspects of life.

Transcript

"The Exaltation of the Lord"

"Whatever things were written aforetime were written for our learning" (Rom. 15:4). The rich treasures of the Book of Jeremiah are just as much ours as are those of the other Scriptures of Truth. For our instruction God our Father has preserved this precious book of moral wealth. Not to teach us history merely; but that those who belong to His beloved Son may be encouraged and edified by the Holy Spirit who inspired its writing; that being strengthened by its spiritual sustenance they may endure with joyfulness and thankfulness, with the brightness of hope beaming before them.

This remarkable book is of immediate and immense importance for us today; when, as then, there is such a disastrous drift from the truth of God. It encourages us to look alone to the One who is "Our Hope," as He is also "The Hope of Israel."

The very name of Jeremiah indicates this.

ISAIAH means "SALVATION OF THE LORD";

JEREMIAH significantly means "EXALTATION OF THE LORD."

This we shall find is the main theme of his testimony. And it is always so in the ways of our blessed God. If men turn away from the truth, the Holy Spirit nevertheless raises up a testimony which exalts the Lord; and sincere souls are drawn to Him. To such the teaching in Jeremiah ministers spiritual strength and stimulation. Let us listen attentively to one of his words:

"Thus says the Lord, Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom, neither let the mighty man in his might, let not the rich man glory in his riches: but let him that glories glory in this, that he understandeth and knows ME, that I am the Lord which exercise loving-kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth. For in these things I delight, says THE LORD" (Jer. 9:23-24).

And now hearken to the answering echo of the same Spirit in the New Testament:

"Of HIM are ye in Christ Jesus, . . . that, according as it written, He that glories, let him glory in THE LORD" (1 Cor. 1:30-31).

The Lord seen by Jeremiah and John

Like John in the New Testament, Jeremiah finds his "Fortress," "Hope," and "Strength" for his prolonged labours in the Lord Himself. They were both thus sustained, though they saw a bright day decline with gathering clouds of destruction, as dense darkness descended upon the professing people of God generally. Jeremiah stood out for the truth for over forty years in the land (vv. 1-3); and continued to speak the word longer still, though carried down into Egypt (Jer. 43-44.) From the revival times of Josiah, with their outward brightness, he toiled on to produce inward reality, into the dark night beyond the days of Zedekiah, whose eyes were put out, as the prophet had signified, by Nebuchadnezzar. They bound him with brazen fetters and carried him to Babylon. Zedekiah thus represented the dark and sightless state of the nation carried into captivity. But the Lord remained faithful, and Jeremiah foretold a future deliverance. John also sees that which professes the Lord's Name sink into Babylonish superstition and darkness, and go down to eternal doom. There is in this case no deliverance. "Her smoke rose up for ever and ever" (Rev. 19:3). The Lord had taken His own, the true assembly, to be with Him previously.

It is instructive, however, to see that before the hour of Babylon's overthrow God calls through John to the same people (the Jews) as He does through Jeremiah: "Come out of her, My People" (Rev. 18:4). "Remove out of the midst of Babylon" (Jer. 50:8); "Flee out of the midst of Babylon . . . My People, go ye out of the midst of her" (Jer. 51:6, 45). Their Redeemer is strong. He will save them, and overthrow all those who rise up against them. He remains faithful, and His glory shines undimmed, notwithstanding all their failure and backsliding. He will pardon them graciously, and bless them, when they turn again to Him.

But even after they had departed from the Lord, Jeremiah sees the Lord in the midst of Israel; and John also sees Him in the midst of that which symbolizes Christendom, before the Babylon system is developed. Truly they both see Him in a unique way. Nevertheless He is there. It is of the utmost importance that we should recognize this now. Jeremiah says, "Yet Thou, O Lord, art in the midst of us, and we are called by Thy Name; leave us not" (Jer. 14:9). John saw, "In the midst of the candlesticks one like unto the Son of Man" (Rev. 1:13). "The seven candlesticks . . . are the seven churches" (v. 20); "the things which are" (v. 19); that is Christendom. All this shows the immediate importance of this book for us now, today. May we be granted great diligence of soul to grasp the divine truths, and the priceless principles which it contains. "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the diligent maketh rich" (Prov. 10:4). We are to "hear what the Spirit says unto the churches" at such a time as this; not what the churches say to us. But this necessitates an attentive ear. The Spirit of Truth is here to glorify

the Son of God. "The exaltation of the Lord" is His present normal work, and this He will carry on to the end, in spite of the defection of the professing churches.

The true heart is not indifferent to this departure from the Truth. He surely feels it keenly like the blessed Lord Himself. Touchingly we find Him saying to the assembly at Ephesus: "I have somewhat against thee because thou hast left thy first love" (Rev. 2:4). And to Israel also: "I remember thee, the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals" (Jer. 2:2). He continues: "They have forsaken Me, the Fountain of living waters" (v. 13); "My people have forgotten Me days without number" (v. 32). How all this shows us what the heart of the Lord feels regarding the ungrateful behaviour of those who profess His Name. Did He not weep over Jerusalem? We see too the sorrow and affliction with which it filled the tender heart of Jeremiah. He saw the value of the people to God as belonging to Him; and then he saw their base sin against Him, and he knew that the rights of God must be maintained. This caused him great conflict of soul, and explains why much that he writes is addressed to God Himself, as representing the people before Him.

But now, at the present time, since the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, since His ascension, and His being "anointed with the oil of joy above His companions" (Heb. 1:9), things are greatly changed. We feel the sorrow surely, as we have said, but joy and gladness is now our characteristic portion. The Lord is no longer "the Man of sorrows"; so we do not find John characterized by sorrow. Although he saw a worse declension than Jeremiah, he writes the last of the inspired scriptures that our "JOY MAY BE FULL." We must bear this firmly in mind, or we shall come short in our experience of that which the Holy Ghost is producing now; since redemption is secured in God's beloved Son, through His blood, and we are blessed in Him, in whom God is fully revealed.

The New Covenant Prophet

Jeremiah has been styled "The Weeping Prophet." He has also been called "The Prophet of Sorrow." This latter is scarcely just, for beyond the night of sorrow he points to the gladsome dawning of the day of Christ's glory. More correctly, he has been called "The Tender-hearted Prophet"; but he is pre-eminently "The New Covenant Prophet." Like a wealthy store embedded in the very centre of his book is discovered the resplendent truth of the New Covenant. There its far-reaching rays glow and glisten in Jeremiah 31; amidst such strange surroundings that even the most diligent students of Scripture seem unable to sound their divine depths. It shows us the rich resource of God triumphing in grace when man failed in responsibility.

The spiritual opulence of that one section alone is abundant enough to encourage us to search diligently. From its generous treasure we find the Holy Spirit taking to embellish the pages of the precious gospels, and epistles too, of the New Testament. There amidst suited surroundings we find its glorious truths shining at the very centre of the silver picture of redemption. The grace and glory of this New Covenant is shown beaming now, with attractive lustre, in our living Lord, the Man Christ Jesus. Jeremiah is supremely the New Covenant Prophet.

Why has this book been so neglected? Both as to the present preaching of the gospel, and also as to the order of the assembly, it's truth is given a place of first importance by the Spirit in the Epistles of Paul, as well as in the Gospels! We are shown in the former that the gospel carries the ministry of the New Covenant of which Jeremiah spoke. We are shown too that when together in assembly, to take the Lord's Supper, we drink The Cup of the New Covenant. Indeed all our blessing is based upon the blood of Christ,

which is the blood of the New Covenant. Our blessed Lord is the Surety of it, and the Mediator of it also; whilst He sums up the covenant itself in His own Person: securing for it an eternal character; so that it becomes the everlasting covenant. How happy should they be who through faith are brought into its unalterable blessings now.

Jeremiah uses the expression "covenant" twenty-five times. His first use of the word is both interesting and instructive. It is found in Jeremiah 3:16, where he speaks of "The Ark of the Covenant." How significant are his words about this "Ark"; as he sees the living glory and covenant coming in Christ with surpassing splendour, he says, "Neither shall they remember it, neither shall they visit it!" It is outshone by a greater glory! This is most helpful for those who cleave to the living Lord today; for there are many who are ensnared in superstition and darkness by vague and mysterious teaching as to "The Ark." I myself have met some such in great distress of mind. We have the living Christ; and we are to follow Him. The last mention of "covenant" is in Jeremiah 50:5. There Babylon is judged; and in true sincerity, the children of Israel and Judah together seek the Lord their God, to be joined to Him in "an everlasting covenant that shall not be forgotten." This is abiding. That which is said concerning the setting aside of "the Ark of the Covenant" involves the bringing in of "the new thing" of Jeremiah 31:22; when the old order will be completely outshone by the glory of the new. Jewish scholars have been perplexed by this verse (Jer. 3:16). They see in it the complete subversion of all they have boasted in. Until they turn to our Lord Jesus Christ, the explanation of it all, their perplexities will not lessen, but increase more and more.

It is needful to notice a striking fact which took place doubtless under God's gracious guidance in Jeremiah's time. A fact which explains the deep moral tone and the frequent use made of the truth and spirit of Deuteronomy, in Jeremiah's ministry. This fact is recorded in 2 Kings 22:8 thus: "Hilkiah the high priest said unto Shaphan the scribe, I have found the Book of the Law in the house of the Lord." (Hilkiah is mentioned in Jeremiah 1:1. Jeremiah was therefore of priestly distinction and dignity, though fulfilling the prophetic office). Now this Book of the Covenant certainly gave character to Jeremiah's ministry. It showed up in glaring colours the inward state of God's people, alongside of the holy claims of God's majesty. This would cause great pain to his tender heart. He saw the outward revival at that time, in Josiah's reign; but he knew the lack of inward reality. He recognized, consequently, that like fruit which is fresh and blooming on the outside, but unsound at the core, speedy corruption must swiftly spread over all. And thus it came to pass, "They grow," he says to the Lord, "yea, they bring forth fruit: Thou art near in their mouth, and far from their reins" (Jer. 12:2). Outward departure must inevitably follow this inward unreality.

Jeremiah's quotations and citations from the Book of the Covenant are too many to mention. Notice a few from Deuteronomy to illustrate. (Compare Jer. 2:6 and Deut. 32:10; Jer. 5:15 and Deut. 28:49, etc.; Jer. 7:33 and Deut. 28:26; Jer. 11:3 and Deut. 27:26; Jer. 11:4 and Deut. 4:20, and so on. Notice "Covenant of the Lord," Jer. 22:8-9 and Deut. 29:24-26).

Jeremiah too is the only prophet who refers to the "token of the covenant"--to "circumcision." After the Book of Joshua the first mention in the Old Testament is in Jeremiah 4:4; and the last in the Old Testament is in Jeremiah 9:25. The Holy Spirit in Romans 2:28-29 quotes the former, to emphasize the inward reality necessary for the true Jew, This again is entirely in accord with the truth found in Jeremiah.

We thus see that it was clearly the people's state, and God's claims as seen in the Book of the Covenant, which weighed with Jeremiah. He has no vision of the fiery Seraphim and the glory of the Lord like Isaiah; no sight of the glorious Cherubim and the throne of majesty like Ezekiel; no miraculous interventions or deliverance like Daniel. The word of the Lord and the truth sustain him, in the face of the waywardness of

the people, to whom he spoke for "the exaltation of the Lord as the New Covenant and Prophet." With him it is the Lord and the state of the people, revealed by the book which expresses the Lord's mind in regard to this.

Divine Names and Titles

Like every real servant of the Lord, Jeremiah laboured in the consciousness that there was one true God. The truth of Deuteronomy 6:4 was laid deep within him. "Jehovah our Elohim is one Jehovah." He knew Him. Using many names and titles to speak of Him, singular and plural too, it is most interesting and instructive to notice the same. Very precious it is also to remark the intimate way in which our blessed God allows Jeremiah to speak to and of Him. This is often found with true Servants of God, and we do not find it condemned, but rather encouraged, in a right way, of course.

The name "Jehovah" is used over six hundred times as if he would hold the people by that name of relationship and covenant. And notwithstanding their declension, he speaks of "Jehovah Elohim" over fifty times; clinging to the fact that Jehovah was their one true God.

"Elohim" is used alone eighteen times; and "Jehovah Elohim of hosts" thirty times; whereas "Jehovah of hosts" is used by him over forty times. In keeping with his tender thoughts, Jeremiah but once speaks of God as "The Great and Mighty El"; and just once likewise of "The Mighty and Terrible One." Twice he calls Him "The Living God" = "The Living Triune God" (plural); and once only "The True God" = "The God of Truth." In various ways, as "King of Nations" (Jer. 20:7); and once as "Jehovah Elohim of all flesh"--a very comprehensive name indeed.

For Israel, in a unique way, Jeremiah beautifully and touchingly speaks of Him as "The Fountain of Living Waters," from whom alone comes true vitality and freshness; as "The Hope of Israel"; and again as "The Saviour of Israel"; and then as their Stay He is "The Confidence of Israel," and "The Holy One of Israel." For their hearts, "The Portion of Jacob." Looking on to His coming, He is "Their Redeemer"; and as after the flesh, of the house of David, "A Righteous Branch."

For his own heart Jeremiah delights in speaking of the Lord in language that shows how entirely his experience comports with the meaning of his own name--"Exaltation of the Lord." The sweet and fragrant names he uses in this intimate connection breathe out to us the preciousness and the support he found in Him amidst his feebleness and frequent trials. "My Strength"; "My Fortress." These tell us eloquently where his weakness reclined. "My Hope"; "My Praise." How beautifully we can see here the secret spring of his heart's confidence; and also the discovered Source of satisfaction and song. When all hope seemed gone for Israel, and there was nothing praiseworthy in the nation, the Lord Himself becomes his "Hope" and his "Praise."

Just another feature before leaving this subject. Twice in this book a name is found which is often quoted and sung about, because of the rich and everlasting blessedness involved in it for the believer. It is "Jehovah Tzidkenu" = "The Lord our righteousness." There is great instruction in the way it is twice used. In the day of Christ's glory it is said first, "HE shall be called Jehovah Tzidkenu"; referring to the same period, it is next said of Jerusalem, Christ's earthly metropolis bride and city, "SHE shall be called Jehovah Tzidkenu" (Jer. 23:6 and Jer. 33:16). She takes character from Him. "The woman is the glory of the man." She will shine in His brightness and beauty. In this again we see the exaltation of the Lord. It is the same in principle for the assembly now; and for the individual too, as is often sung:

"No refuge, no safety, in self could I see;

'Jehovah Tzidkenu' my Saviour must be."

A Type of our Lord Jesus Christ

The Spirit of Christ was in Jeremiah (1 Peter 1:11). We are therefore justified in seeing some express foreshadowing of our blessed Lord in him. There is doubtless much about Jeremiah also that stands out in striking contrast to Him. For instance, if, like his Lord, he is led as "a lamb" by his persecutors "to the slaughter" (Jer. 11:19), he certainly was not farther, in this case, like Him; for Christ "opened not His mouth." Again, they said, as to the prophet, "Let us cut him off from the land of the living." They did not, however, do this to Jeremiah; but they did it to our blessed Saviour (Isa. 53:8). They desired that Jeremiah's "name may be remembered no more"; but of Christ it is asked, "Who shall declare His generation?"

Like our Lord Jesus Christ, the prophet loved Israel and Jerusalem. He felt very really their sorrowful state; so deeply did Jeremiah enter into it that we find him exclaiming, "My bowels, my bowels, I am pained at my very heart" (Jer. 4:19). And just as if their desolation was his own, he cries, "When I would comfort myself against sorrow, my heart is faint in me" (Jer. 8:18).

Christ wept over Jerusalem as He beheld it, and spake of its sore affliction. Going into the temple, too, he was grieved to see the religious trafficking that went on; as Jeremiah had said, "Is this house, which is called by My name, become a den of robbers in your eyes?" (Jer. 7:11). In the Lamentations we hear the prophet saying, "I am the man that has seen affliction" (Jer. 3:1); again, "He giveth his cheek to him that smiteth him; he is filled with reproach" (Jer. 3:30). And again, how like the Lord Jesus, when he personifies the city, saying, "Is it nothing to you, all ye that pass by? behold, and see if there be any sorrow like unto my sorrow, which is done unto me, wherewith the Lord has afflicted me in the day of His fierce anger" (Jer. 1:12). Only Christ could enter fully into all that their sin had brought upon them. Jeremiah could not do that. The blessed Saviour could do so; and in grace, and infinite love, He did so perfectly. Yea, He Himself bore the judgment which their sins deserved, as well as ours, that we might be saved. Blessed be His holy name.

Referring again to Deuteronomy, it is most interesting as well as instructive in this connection to see that the very words which are spoken there, as to the coming "Prophet," are applied to Jeremiah, though they distinctly and primarily refer to the Lord. It is said, "I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren like unto thee (Moses), and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him" (Deut. 18:18). Of Jeremiah we read, "The Lord said unto me, Behold, I have put My words into thy mouth" (Jer. 1:9); and in verse 17, "Speak unto them all that I command thee." It is easily understood, therefore, why the prophet Jeremiah had such a pre-eminent place in the mind of an Israelite; and why when our blessed Saviour was here some thought He was "Jeremias, or one of the prophets" (Matt. 16:14); and why as giving character to the other prophets it should be said in Matthew 27:9 that what was foretold in Zechariah 11:12-13 came under the title of "Jeremy the Prophet"; because he stood at the head, just as David does with the Psalms: though many stand under other names. Jeremiah, unlike Isaiah and others in this respect, becomes himself a distinct type of CHRIST AS THE PROPHET foretold in Deuteronomy.

It was "because of the word of the Lord" he could say, It was made "reproach unto me, and a derision daily"; "Every one mocks me" (Jer. 20:7-8). It is the Gospel of John which gives us in a very special way

the precious Antitype, the Prophet raised up by God, perfectly fulfilling what was foretold and foreshadowed as to Himself.

"ART THOU THAT PROPHET?" they ask John the Baptist, in a manner that showed they all expected His coming. "And he answered, No" (John 1:21). They then question him why he baptized if he was not "that Prophet" (v. 25); but he tells them, "There standeth One among you, whom ye know not." When the Lord fed the five thousand in John 6, we read, "Then those men, when they had seen the miracle that Jesus did, said, This is of a truth that Prophet that should come unto the world" (v. 14). Through Moses God had spoken to them, and fed them in the wilderness; and they would be reminded of the promise of the Prophet, who should surpass Moses, and still be "like unto" him. And in the next chapter, when He spake of the "rivers of living water," we are told, "Many of the people therefore, when they heard this saying, said, Of a truth this is THE PROPHET" (John 7:40).

In Moses' day the water flowed to them from the rock; "that Rock was Christ"; but He spoke of "the Spirit which they that believe on Him should receive; for the Holy Ghost was not yet given: because Jesus was not yet glorified." He Himself is the giver of the living water now.

When speaking as the eternal Son to the Father, in the blessed intimate converse of Jeremiah 17, He said, "I have given them the words which Thou gavest Me: and they have received them, and have known surely that I came out from Thee, and they have believed that Thou didst send Me" (v. 8). Here He stands alone in His divine supremacy. Promises and prophets may foretell and foreshadow Him; but as it was on the holy mount, at the presence of "the excellent glory,"--Moses and Elias withdrew, and "They saw no man save Jesus only": so here. As THE ETERNAL SON who could speak of the glory He had WITH THE FATHER BEFORE THE WORLD WAS, He is beyond type and shadow, although fulfilling them all.

He indeed spake what was given to Him by the Father to speak; for He had become flesh to draw near to us. He was truly a Man amongst men, walking in grace and in dependence upon God. As the promised Prophet, the people had been told to hear Him (Deut. 18:15). They had been afraid of the voice of divine majesty, speaking amidst fire and tempest, from the smoking mount of law giving; God therefore promised to raise up One "from among their brethren," who should speak in divine grace. He came to His own, but His own received Him not. All through John's Gospel we find Him speaking as "that Prophet." He could say, "The Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak"; and "As the Father said unto Me, so I speak" (John 12:49-50). Peter, in Acts 3:22, referring to the promise in Deuteronomy 18:15, said, "HIM SHALL YE HEAR." Stephen also quotes it in Acts 7:37, "Him shalt ye hear." Upon the mount which we have mentioned, from the excellent glory, when the bright cloud overshadowed them, a Voice is heard, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; HEAR YE HIM" (Matt. 17:5). Here Jeremiah and all others must stand aside. Favoured and faithful servants of the Lord all gladly give place to the PRE-EMINENT ONE, THE SON. We might well have esteemed it a privilege to listen to Moses or Jeremiah; but what high honour is ours, to be called to hear the Son; to receive His words, to listen to His well-known voice, speaking in divine grace. May our ears be attentive to His communications, as His were to the Father (Isa. 50).

Other Names in Jeremiah

It is only needful to say a few words on some of these. Their use shows what is prominent in this book. Nebuchadnezzar who is called by the Lord "My Servant" is spoken of about forty times. He is raised up to execute His judgment upon Israel; and upon other nations too. The Lord says, "I have given all these

lands into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, My Servant: . . . and all nations shall serve him." Dominion is given to him of God; it is taken away from Israel.

Zedekiah, of whom we have already spoken, is mentioned about forty times also. He has a prominent place, as being the immediate cause of the judgment falling upon Jerusalem. The other kings who reigned over Israel in Jeremiah's time are not so much in evidence. Josiah was the first, he is named eighteen times. Then came Jehoahaz, but he is not thus mentioned at all. Jehoiakim followed, and is spoken of twenty three times. After him came Jehoiachin, and he is named twice in Jeremiah 52. Lastly Zedekiah, to whom we have referred.

Before leaving these kings a notable and significant fact must be pointed out. Jeremiah spoke of Jehoahaz and Jehoiachin under changed names. Why was this? Jehoahaz meant "The Lord shall hold"; but he calls him Shallum (Jer. 22:11), meaning "Recompensed"; judgment was to fall upon him (v. 22). Jehoiachin which means "The Lord will establish," was called by Jeremiah Jeconiah, meaning "The Lord establishes." This is doubtless to indicate that it will be done, not in Jehoiachin, but in our Lord Jesus Christ, as he explains in Jeremiah 23:5-6; for just previously he had contemptuously called him Coniah (Jer. 22:24-28), "A despised broken idol; a vessel wherein is no pleasure." In Christ alone raised from among the dead, of the seed of David, can the Kingdom be established permanently.

This remarkable use of names by Jeremiah is interestingly illustrated for us in the case of Pashur, as recorded in Jeremiah 21. He smote the prophet and put him in the stocks. Jeremiah expressively tells him that the Lord had not named him Pashur, meaning "Prosperity round about"; but Magor-missabib, which means "Fear round about"; for he should be a terror to himself and others about him.

A beautiful and cheering contrast to this is given to us in chapters 38 and 39. Ebed-melech ("Servant of the King") delivers Jeremiah from a dreadful dungeon. Thus he served the true King. Promise of deliverance is made to him from that which he feared; because, it is said, "Thou hast put thy trust in Me, says the Lord" (Jer. 39:17-18).

Baruch, meaning "Blessed," cleaves to the prophet of the Lord, and labours along with him among God's people. He receives a similar promise (Jer. 45). But he is not to seek exaltation for himself. It is the exaltation of the Lord which must be put first.

It should be pointed out that the army of Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, is spoken of as the Chaldeans some forty-two times by Jeremiah. Pharaoh, on whom Israel was in constant danger of relying, eleven times. The evil and dark state of the times is indicated by the frequent mention of Baal and Baalim; also of Molech and Tophet; and The Son of Hinnom; and even The Queen of heaven (Jer. 44:17-25).

A bright contrast to the covenant-breaking princes and people of Israel is seen in the Rechabites, of whose constancy we are told in Jeremiah 35; while the latter performed faithfully their father's commandments, Israel disobeyed the Lord's commandments. "Therefore thus says the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before Me for ever" (Jer. 35:19). God's approval of faithfulness is thus shown.

Enough has been said under this heading to indicate the general trend of the book.

Oneness with the Rest of the Bible

We have already noticed that the same Spirit which pervades the book of the covenant breathes afresh in the Book of Jeremiah. The deep moral tones of Deuteronomy especially, and frequently the very same words, find their place in this remarkable book. The thought of "Covenant," which flows through the whole Bible, finds a unique as well as prominent place here. He not only mentions the ark of the covenant, when showing that it will be surpassed by the splendour of that which is to come in Christ; but he alone of the prophets speaks of circumcision, the sign of the covenant: showing, however, that it should be a matter of the heart, and thus linking with the truth of the gospels and epistles. Reference indeed is made to it in Romans 2:28-29; and the new covenant involves, as Jeremiah and the letter to the Hebrews tell us, the law being written in the heart, as well as in the mind; so that they shall all know the Lord. This oneness as to the matter of the covenant is important for us to notice in these days. Christ, as foretold in Isaiah, and as shown in the New Testament, is personally the Covenant, as well as its Surety and Mediator.

The temple, too (and the house of God in a wider sense, linking the thought with Shiloh where the tabernacle was), Jeremiah shows in harmony with Old and New Testaments, becomes a den of robbers, and is to be made desolate. A hypocritical set may "enter in at these gates to worship the Lord," trusting in "lying words, saying, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, The temple of the Lord, are these" (Jer. 7:4); but such sayings did not take the place of inward reality before God. It only made their case worse. "They that handle the law knew Me not," says the Lord (Jer. 2:8); and though "the oracles of God" were committed to them (Rom. 3:2), and they said, "We are wise, and the law of the Lord is with us" (Jer. 8:8), yet again we hear an answering echo in Romans, "Thou that makest thy boast of the law, through breaking the law dishonourest thou God" (Rom. 2:23). Indeed the whole context breathes the one Spirit.

The Bible story of the sorrows of Israel and their future fullness of joy; the wrestling, travail, and trouble of Jacob's night, giving place to the sun-rising of Israel's princely glory and dignity, when brought to Christ, finds a special place in Jeremiah. The Lord in the Gospels told us that the darkest, if the shortest, part of their night of sorrow was yet to come, before the dawn of deliverance (Matt. 24, etc.). The Book of Revelation shows us the same thing. Jeremiah alone calls it "The time of Jacob's trouble." "But he shall be saved out of it" (Jer. 30:7). It is similarly told by him in the next chapter, illustrated by the weeping of Rachel for her children; but with the reward of blessing and joy to follow (Jer. 31:15, 17). This affecting story, beginning in Genesis, and carried on through the pages of the Scriptures of truth, finds its culminating centre in Christ, as is well known, in the opening of the New Testament. God's dealings in judgment and mercy also with other nations, as well as with Israel, has a place in Jeremiah in harmony with other Scriptures. They are to be judged righteously, according to their sins; nevertheless abundance of mercy awaits them. When Israel is restored to the Lord, and own, "The Lord lives in truth, in judgment, and in righteousness"; then "THE NATIONS SHALL BLESS THEMSELVES IN HIM, AND IN HIM SHALL THEY GLORY" (Jer. 4:2).

This is Jeremiah's main theme, consistent with the meaning of his name--"The exaltation of the Lord." And yet it is the theme of Scripture, the theme of the Holy Spirit. His name is to be exalted; He is to be glorified. Let Him that glories, glory in the Lord. Man's sin and failure, Israel's sin and failure, become a means for Him to be exalted in His forgiving mercy, grace and love; as well as in justice, truth, and holiness. Here Jeremiah and all the rest of the Bible are indissolubly one. How utterly unlike, how absolutely different, to the corrupt myths, legends, and stories of Grecian and other gods. How bright and blessed the contrast! We may well glory in the Lord! and magnify the grace that has called us to find our satisfaction in Himself; in Him who is so beautifully named by Jeremiah, in unison with the rest of Scripture--"THE FOUNTAIN OF LIVING WATERS" (Jer. 2:13; 17:13; Ps. 36:9; Rev. 21:6, etc.).

We will here close our remarks under this heading. If the Divine Names and Titles previously spoken of are compared with their use elsewhere, additional witness to the oneness of Scripture will be found in the Gospels, quotations and citations from Jeremiah are made in Matthew 2:17; and 21:13; Mark 11:17; and Luke 19:46. References are found in Matthew 19:26 to Jeremiah 32:17, 37; Luke 13:35 and Matthew 23:38 to Jeremiah 22:5; Mark 13:5 to Jeremiah 29:8. Also Romans 9:21 to Jeremiah 18:6; Romans 3:28-29 to Jeremiah 4:4; 1 Corinthians 1:31 and 2 Corinthians 10:17 to Jeremiah 9:24. Finally to Jeremiah 31:31-34 in Matthew 26:28; Mark 14:24; Luke 22:10; 1 Corinthians 11:25; 2 Corinthians 3:6; also Hebrews 8:8-13; 9:15; 10:13-18; and 12:24. All these final quotations are regarding the New Covenant. Anyone who attempts to speak the Word concerning the covenant, found all through the Bible, proclaimed by the Holy Spirit in the gospel, and remembered in the cup at the Lord's Supper, according to the Word of God, does so at his peril.

Kings and Prophets

Kings who reigned in Jerusalem during the forty years of Jeremiah's labours were Josiah, Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah. We have already spoken of these. Nebuchadnezzar, the King of Babylon, with whom the times of the Gentiles began, comes into God-given prominence in Jeremiah's time. Dominion is given to him, and taken away from Israel. There is a remarkable date given in Jeremiah in relation to this. It is probably the most important date known to any chronologer in any ancient records. It enables him, as far as possible, to bring into order events up to that date, and from thence to our own time. It is mentioned no less than four times by Jeremiah, in 25:1; 36:1; 45:1; and 46:2. It is the synchronism of 25:1 which is so striking and useful. "The fourth year of Jehoiakim" is the "first year of Nebuchadnezzar." This chapter gives us a formal, solemn, and impressive declaration from the Lord. He gives up Jerusalem. He forsakes "His covert, as the lion" (v. 38); and evil goes forth "from nation to nation." King Nebuchadnezzar is His servant to punish them. The date of verse 1 also fixes the twenty-third year of Jeremiah's labours (v. 3) "from the thirteenth year of Josiah." It also fixes the time of the important prophecy of the seventy years' captivity given in this same chapter. It is the year he was told to write his book (Jer. 36:1), which Jehoiakim destroyed (v. 23). It was also the year of his word to his secretary Baruch (Jer. 45); and likewise the fulfilment of that against Egypt, as recorded in the next chapter (Jer. 46:2), when Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, smote them. The preservation of these dates by the Holy Spirit so exactly, confirmed, as they have been, by records recovered from the dust of ages, has great significance to the thoughtful believer, and especially so, seeing they mark the beginning of the times of the Gentiles, which are now swiftly reaching their close.

When that close comes it will be found that the kingdom and dominion will revert again to the royal line of David. It may seem to have disappeared; but the fact is, the Man Christ Jesus, the Seed Royal of the house of David, although cut off by Israel as was foretold, was raised from among the dead; and is now hidden in the heavens, till the time comes for His being shown again to the nation. It was prefigured in the hiding of Joash when it was thought that all the Seed Royal was massacred. But in due time he was shown to the nation, crowned and anointed amid joyful cries of "GOD SAVE THE KING." In a greater and more glorious way this is to be fulfilled in the true King, our Lord Jesus Christ. This is doubtless one reason why God has so carefully preserved in Scripture the record of the line of the Seed of promise. How thankful should our hearts be, that we have been called and justified through grace, and built into His assembly, while He is rejected, and hidden in the heavens, the bright prospect being ours, that "when Christ who is our life, shall appear, then shall we also appear with Him in glory" (Col. 3:4).

"The heavens shall glow with splendour, but brighter far than they,

The saints shall shine in glory as Christ shall them array.

The beauty of the Saviour shall dazzle every eye,

In the crowning day that's coming by and by."

Jeremiah shows us that the Lord is the true Potentate. Above all earthly kings, He is "the King of Eternity" and "the King of nations" (Jer. 10:7-10). "Who would not fear Thee?" asks the prophet. "At His wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide His indignation." In chapter 46, Pharaoh-necho, King of Egypt, is punished, according to the word of "the King whose name is the Lord of Hosts" (v. 18). And though he executes this through the King of Babylon, who is also used to carry Israel into captivity, yet Babylon's punishment also must surely follow, and Israel be again set free, "saith the King, whose name is the Lord of Hosts" (Jer. 51:57). And this overturning of kings and nations and empires has gone on, and will go on, until He comes and establishes justice and equity in the earth; and reigns as universal Emperor--the Prince of the kings of the earth, the king of kings, the Lord of lords.

"Yea, Amen, let all adore Thee,

High on Thine exalted throne;

Saviour, take the power and glory,

Claim the kingdom for thy own.

It is foretold of Him in that day: "He shall judge the poor of the people . . . He shall deliver the needy" (Ps. 72:4, 12). Josiah in his early days was a beautiful type of Him in this respect. Jeremiah touchingly refers to it: "He judged the cause of The poor and needy; then it was well with him" (Jer. 22:16). The prophet adds a word of great practical import to those who understand the great importance of the true knowledge of God: "Was not this to KNOW ME? says the Lord."

THE PROPHETS in Jeremiah's time included some of the very best, though there were also some of the worst. These latter, though moving among God's people, "prophesied by Baal, and walked after things that do not profit" (Jer. 2:8); "The prophets prophesied falsely" (Jer. 5:31) and yet used the Lord's name, though He "sent them not" (Jer. 14:15). Therefore "by sword and famine shall those prophets be consumed." Jeremiah's heart was broken within him because of these prophets (Jer. 23:9). Adultery, lying, profanity, false dreaming, lightness, and lewdness characterized them; they were "as Sodom," so debased had they become (Jer. 23:14). "Therefore, behold, I am against the prophet, says the Lord" (Jer. 23:30). In Jeremiah 28 we read of Hananiah, who prophesied falsely in the Name of the Lord. Opposing Jeremiah, he made the people to trust in a lie. "Therefore thus says the Lord; behold I will cast thee from off the face of the earth; this year thou shalt die, because thou hadst taught rebellion against the Lord. So Hananiah the prophet died the same year in the seventh month" (Jer. 28:16-17). This is a sad illustration of these false prophets.

Turning away from this dark picture we find on the other hand some of the most distinguished and honoured prophets of all time, contemporary with Jeremiah. Some of them were doubtless influenced by the word of the Lord through him; perhaps truly converted. Daniel as a lad lived at Jerusalem in Jeremiah's time. He was carried away to Babylon; and there he still heeded the prophet's words. Ezekiel was another who was taken off to Babylon later on (Ezek. 1:2 and 40:1). He laboured similarly to Jeremiah, only among the captives. Habakkuk probably served the Lord in Jeremiah's days. Zephaniah prophesied "in the days

of Josiah" also. He spoke much of "the day of the Lord," a day of wrath and distress, a day of wasteness, desolation, darkness, and gloominess; a day of clouds and thick darkness (Zeph. 1:15). But like Jeremiah he foretold the future day of grace and glory, peace and plenty; the day of praise and prosperity; when the pride of Israel should be removed, and walking in lowliness and love they should "no more be haughty" because of the Lord's Holy mountain (Zeph. 3:11), the centre of earthly blessing. The Lord Himself will then joy over them with singing (Zeph. 3:17).

One more true-hearted servant of the Lord must be mentioned here--Huldah the Prophetess. In the early years of Jeremiah, when the book of the covenant was found, they sought the word of the Lord from her lips. Her answer breathes the same tone and spirit which marked Jeremiah: "Thus says the Lord, Behold, I will bring evil upon this place, and upon the inhabitants thereof, even all the words of the book which the King of Judah has read, because they have forsaken Me, and have burned incense to other gods" (2 Kings 22:16-17). Nevertheless, because Josiah's heart was tender, and he humbled himself before the Lord, he should be spared from seeing the evil to come. He read to the people "all the words of the book of the covenant which was found in the house of the Lord" (2 Kings 23:2); and the King commanded them, "Keep the Passover unto the Lord your God, as it is written in the book of this covenant" (v. 21); and from the days of the judges "there was not holden such a Passover."

Another true prophet, even if a timid one, is often overlooked among those who let their light shine before men at this period. Jeremiah alone records his story in Jeremiah 26:20-23. His name is Urijah, which means "Light of the Lord." He spoke as Jeremiah had done, but was afraid and fled into Egypt. He was brought back and slain by Jehoiakim.

Priests, Pastors, and People

As to the priests, we are shown a picture, which, alas! is only too common all through the Bible. "Both prophet and priest are profane; yea, in My house have I found their wickedness. says the Lord. Wherefore their way shall be unto them as slippery ways in the darkness" (Jer. 23:11-12). "The priests said not, Where is the Lord? and they that handle the law knew Me not" (Jer. 2:8). Pashur, like Jeremiah, was of the priestly family. His sin brought judgment upon him, as is recorded in Jeremiah 20. He is a striking example.

Jeremiah's father was Hilkiah (Jer. 1:1). The name of the high priest who found the book of the law was Hilkiah (2 Kings 22:8). It looks as if this must be the same person, considering all the circumstances. It is a cause for thanksgiving that we have not now, in this day, to seek a high priest. God Himself has provided One for us who "continueth ever," who "ever lives." There is no change in the priesthood with which we are connected. Of Jesus, our high priest, God has said, "Thou art a priest for ever." No less a person than God's own beloved Son is suitable now, "Such an high priest became us" (Heb. 7:26). He is become higher than the heavens.

The pastors, like the prophets and the priests, were sunken in sin. The word for pastor is "raab," meaning "to feed." This word is only translated "pastor" in Jeremiah; it is translated "shepherd" usually. It is a very general term. It seems to cover all those who care for and feed the flock of God.

After speaking of the ignorance of the priests, Jeremiah adds, "The pastors also transgressed against Me, and the prophets prophesied by Baal" (Jer. 2:8). He tells us, "The pastors are become brutish and have not sought the Lord" (Jer. 10:11). They trod down the vineyard of the Lord, and made His pleasant portion desolate, so that it mourned unto Him (Jer. 12:10-11). The Lord says, "My People has been like lost

sheep, and their shepherds (pastors) have caused them to go astray" (Jer. 50:6). Woe is pronounced upon these scattering, selfish pastors (Jer. 23:1-2); the wind shall eat them up (Jer. 22:22); they shall cry and howl when the fierce anger of the Lord shall fall (Jer. 25:34-36).

Among the gifts mentioned as given by the ascended Head of the assembly in Ephesians 4, is the pastor. Only it is important to see that the pastor and teacher is united in one person--"some pastors and teachers"; not "some pastors and some teachers." It is a double gift in one individual. The importance of this is great, for many teachers have almost become mere scholars and theorists; and many pastors almost philanthropists. The practical work of the pastor keeps the gift of teaching in wise use and useful exercise. But as in Jeremiah's day, so now, the debasement of these things is appalling. Our Lord Jesus Christ, the good and great Shepherd of the sheep, forewarned us of this in John 10. So also did the Apostle Paul in Acts 20:28, 33. Our safety and blessing lies in abiding with the Lord, who never fails in His Shepherd care towards every one of the true flock.

There are exceptions, thank God, to the general corruption. And it is refreshing and cheering to find Jeremiah speaking of the time when pastors shall be given according to the heart of the Lord, "who shall feed you with knowledge and understanding" (Jer. 3:15). "I will set up shepherds over them which shall feed them; and they shall fear no more, nor be discouraged, neither shall they be lacking, says the Lord" (Jer. 23:4). Yea, he foretells the day when the Lord Himself shall recover His scattered people, and "gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock" (Jer. 31:10). Yea, of the seed of David, the shepherd king, he tells us, One shall be raised up in His days "Israel shall dwell safely" (Jer. 23:5-6); the believer knows this Shepherd now, and receives eternal life from Him before He returns to gather Israel.

We have seen what is said as to the kings, prophets, priests, and pastors. And now we shall see that the people become like their princes. Like master like man. The prophet is fortified to meet their state by the Lord. He is first set "against the princes thereof, against the priests, and against the people of the land" (Jer. 1:18). They had not only forsaken and forgotten the Lord, though still naming His holy name; but they had become idolatrous. Touchingly the Lord pleads with them. He asks, "Have I been a wilderness unto Israel? a land of darkness?" (Jer. 2:31). But they would not hear. Jeremiah 34 illustrates their state. The princes and the people make a covenant and break it soon after. Jerusalem, therefore, the princes and the people shall become "a desolation, an astonishment, an hissing, and a curse." And His word was executed with startling exactness.

Egypt, too, was to reap the results of her ways. Israel was continually turning to her for help instead of turning to the Lord (Jer. 2:17-18). Now, says the Lord, "Thou also shalt be ashamed of Egypt" (Jer. 2:36). In chapter 46 is recorded His word as to her.

The Philistines, too, are judged in chapter 47. Moab likewise in the next chapter: "For was not Israel a derision unto thee" (Jer. 48:27). Moab is "exceeding proud." In chapter 49 the Ammonites receive recompense. Edom also is punished. Likewise Damascus and Kedar, and Hazor, and Elam. God had raised up the King of Babylon to execute His righteous and necessary judgments upon the peoples, Israel, Egypt, "and all the mingled peoples, and all the kings of the land of Uz, and all the kings of the land of the Philistines"; yea, upon "all the kingdoms of the world" (Jer. 25:20-26). The state of things was such as to call for this from God's hand.

But Babylon herself cannot escape. We are told of her judgment in chapters 50 and 51; in language that reminds us of what is said concerning Babylon and God's people in the Book of Revelation. She shall sink

and rise no more; whereas Israel shall go forth out of the midst of Babylon. This doubtless looks on to the future, to the end of "the times of the Gentiles"; when the kingdom and dominion shall revert again to Israel, blessed under our Lord Jesus Christ. A remnant is preserved for this purpose. Any one capable of seeing recognizes the rise of what is Babylonish on all hands; but "though Babylon should mount up to heaven, she shall be brought down. The Chaldean scholar, religionist, spiritualist, astrologer, and idolater was able by his wisdom to develop a wonderful system in days gone by. It will soon reappear in a more marvellous manner than ever, as we are shown in Revelation 17 and 18.

One verse in Jeremiah is exceedingly significant in this connection; and more especially so because the present-day "scholars" reject it as a gloss. It is verse 2 of chapter 10, it stands as written by Jeremiah in a different language to the rest of the book, in the Chaldean language. And let it be noted carefully, it is to tell us that the gods of Babylon shall perish. The very strength of the Chaldean system should be utterly destroyed. Again we say, it is significant that God should inspire this verse to be written, not in Hebrew, but in Chaldee. It is one of those remarkable instances, of which there are many in the Scriptures of Truth, where God departs from mere rule, to impress the reader and cause him to consider. Sensible men nowadays do this often; but "scholars" are not always sensible; many of them would try to tie down the sacred writings of God to mere routine and rule. The fact is, the people of the true God were about to go into captivity in the land of Chaldea. This verse, in the language of their captors, would strengthen the faithful, amidst the religious corruption of Babylon, and command the consideration of such as Cyrus and others after, who were used of God to overthrow the Chaldean abominations.

The brilliant setting of this verse (Jer. 10-11) should be noticed. Just before, Israel is told not to learn the way of these idolatrous nations. Their wise men, one and all, were senseless and foolish. But the LORD IS THE GOD OF TRUTH; HE IS THE LIVING GOD, THE KING OF ETERNITY. In the following verse creation is ascribed to Him. Idols and false gods must perish before Him. "The portion of Jacob is not like them . . . the Lord of Hosts is His name" (v. 16). The glory of the God of Israel must yet cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died and rose again to bring this to pass. He will return to Israel and establish the pleasure of the Lord in the earth; and gladness and song shall fill every heart. The peoples, Israel first, and the nations also, shall come under His righteous sway, and be blessed in Him.

Fulfilments of Jeremiah's Words

Although there were no startling or miraculous interventions on God's part, to publicly justify the words of Jeremiah at the moment, nevertheless, the exact fulfilment of his words, though delayed apparently, was all the more striking afterwards. There was nothing immediate or sudden. Jeremiah spoke the word of the Lord and suffered for it. God in long-suffering mercy waited upon the people, patiently looking for their repentance. That did not take place; and meanwhile the prophet was reproached and ill-treated. Then, when the hearts of the people, the princes, the priests, the prophets and the pastors were hardened utterly, the fulfilments of Jeremiah's words, were swiftly executed. Surprisingly so, both in public and private events; also in personal and particular details. To name them all would occupy too much space; but some of them should be mentioned here.

In Josiah's day, things looked very prosperous at Jerusalem; nevertheless, the prophet foretold upon the city, "evil from the north, and a great destruction" (Jer. 4:6). This was exactly fulfilled, but we are apt to overlook its miraculous nature. Did some one emphatically announce today that St. Petersburg would be captured and destroyed, most people would smile and scout such an idea. If it took place, the fulfilment

would be the more striking because of their scepticism. Thus it is with Jeremiah's prophecy as to Jerusalem. Again, everything seemed to be outwardly flourishing with the temple worship; but as the Lord desolated Shiloh, where he set His Name at the first, so, said the prophet, should it be done to this house, because of their wickedness (Jer. 7:11-14). This too came to pass (2 Kings 25:8-17).

Such striking signs as the girdle (Jer. 13) were precisely fulfilled. Jehovah had taken up Israel for His honour; but having sought their own honour with "great pride" (v. 9), they should be destroyed as a nation. Similarly the potter's vessel of Jeremiah 18; and the earthen vessel of Jeremiah 19. Also the bonds and yokes of chapters 27 and 28. Hananiah might oppose the truth of this last sign, and break the yokes of wood; but it only served to make the word of the Lord more impressive; calling for the prophecy concerning the yokes of iron, and Hananiah's own doom. We know how all this came to pass, and in a way which leaves no room to question either the divine prediction, or the divine consummation.

The oft-repeated prophecies concerning the punishment of the people of Israel, and their fulfilment, might well impress the mind, but when Jeremiah foretells that the Lord "will punish all them which are circumcised with the uncircumcised; Egypt, Judah, and Edom and the children of Ammon, and Moab and all that are in the utmost corners" (Jer. 9:25-26), and we see Babylon a comparatively young power, rise up and do this, it is enough to fill us with astonishment, and to carry conviction to any thoughtful person that God rules in the Kingdom of men. Chapters 45 to 49 all had their fulfilment in this connection in a most marvellous manner.

The important and formal prophecy of Jeremiah 25 is still more impressive. It contains the well-known word as in the 70 years servitude (vv. 9-16). It should be noticed, however, that this again includes the other nations, as well as Israel. And thus it was that all these nations served the King of Babylon 70 years.

A further word on this prophecy as to Israel must be added. In 29:10-12, we read, "Thus says the Lord, that after 70 years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place. Then shall ye call upon Me, and ye shall go and pray unto Me, and I will hearken unto you." It was this word, evidently, that years after set Daniel praying: "I Daniel understood by books the number of the years whereof the word of the Lord came to Jeremiah the prophet." So for the fulfilment of this promise Jeremiah was used in prophesy; Daniel in prayer; and Cyrus, a man who did not know the Lord, in providence. God had said of Cyrus long before, through Isaiah, "I have surnamed thee though thou hast not known Me . . . Thee I have raised up in righteousness." Again we read, Now in the first year of Cyrus, King of Persia, that the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah might be accomplished, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, King of Persia, that he made proclamation" etc. (2 Chr. 36:22). So exact, and so encouraging, is this word and its actual accomplishment, that it is full of comfort and cheer to the soul that trusts in the blessed God; knowing that, even at the present time, He makes all things work together for the good of His own, who have been called by His grace, according to His purpose. Even a detail such as buying a field (Jer. 32:7) is used of God to show in the very presence of the desolation, about to be brought upon the land, that His good word concerning His people should verily come to pass; and the fields should flourish and be fruitful again. And so it was Our God and Father is a faithful God, who fulfils His word.

Of individuals: that which was said concerning Jehoahaz or rather "Shallum" (Jer. 22:11-12) came to pass with solemn precision, as also did the word concerning Jehoiakim (Jer. 22:17-19). His son, called by his father Jehoiachin, but by the prophet Coniah, became another witness of the truth of God's holy word (Jer. 22:24-30). The case of Zedekiah is perhaps even more astonishing, because of the exactness with which

enigmatic details were executed. That Zedekiah should be delivered, with the city and the people, into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar (Jer. 21:3-7), was plainly foretold and fulfilled. There was nothing obscure in that, although so solemnly true. Nor was there any enigma in Jeremiah's words to Zedekiah in Jeremiah 34:2, that the city should be burned with fire; and his eyes should behold the eyes of the King of Babylon. Doubtless, after the words were verified, they would speak with a loud voice to Zedekiah. The very reference to his eyes, so often made, must have given him to feel afterwards that he had been in the presence of omniscience, when he heard, but heeded not the words of the suffering prophet. When we read, however, of Zedekiah, that he is to be taken captive to Babylon, to the land of the Chaldeans: "Yet he shall not see it" (Ezek. 12:13), we wonder how this can be, and feel it must have some covered significance. But all is clearly explained, when we read of the just but awful punishment which befell this wicked prince, who slighted God's word, and dishonoured His holy Name: "The King of Babylon slew the sons of Zedekiah in Riblah before his eyes . . . moreover he put out Zedekiah's eyes, and bound him with chains, to carry him to Babylon" (Jer. 39:6-7). Without eyes to see the land of his captivity, he would have leisure to remember the claims of the holy, omniscient God against whose word He had sinned so grievously; and it may be hoped, repent, and receive His forgiving mercy.

Intensely interesting and instructive as all this is, we may not further follow out these fulfilments. But a short reference must be made to another class of prophecy, which has partly been fulfilled and yet awaits completion. There is much like this in the Old Testament. Take one verse: Isaiah 9:6--"Unto us a child is born." That part has been fulfilled. "The government shall be upon His shoulder." That part awaits fulfilment. In between, Christ has been rejected, and is hidden in the heavens, and His assembly is being formed during the time of His rejection. She will share in His glory, as His bride, when "the government shall be upon His shoulder."

In Jeremiah 33:15 the Lord says: "I will cause to grow up unto David the Righteous Branch." The opening of the New Testament shows us the fulfilment of this in our Lord Jesus Christ, of David's line. But the word continues, "He shall execute judgment and righteousness in the land"; and "In those days Judah shall be saved." This is yet to come. In Jeremiah 23:5 we have the same truth in almost the same words; only, in the latter, "He" is called Jehovah Tzidkenu: whereas in the other "she" (Jerusalem) takes the same name from Him whose city she is.

Chapters 30 and 31 can only be understood in the same way. Israel is to be restored and blessed under the royal line of "David their King" (Jer. 30:9); but before that, "the time of Jacob's trouble must come" (Jer. 30:7). Nevertheless Israel shall be saved, and established again: "For I have loved thee with an everlasting love," says the Lord (Jer. 31:3). A voice of weeping, however, is heard in Ramah. This has taken place (Matt. 2:17); but it will be heard again before the full blessing of Israel comes. Weeping for a night; joy in the morning. The cases of Rachel and of Jacob illustrate this principle of God's dealing with Israel all along. This explains for us also a verse which has given so much exercise and thought (Jer. 31:22)--the "New thing." It doubtless includes the truth of "THE SON GIVEN," the child born of the Virgin Mary; but it takes in likewise the woman Israel, centring in the Metropolis Jerusalem, no longer compassing the Ark of the Covenant as of old (Jer. 3:16, 19), but A MAN, who is Himself the Covenant; everlasting, living beyond death, having once died, now alive for evermore. This is "new." No other explanation answers to that word. It agrees, too, with the "New Covenant" spoken of a few verses after. Of Jerusalem it can consequently be said, in the very next verse, "O habitation of justice, and mountain of holiness." She then takes her name (which speaks also of her new character) from the Name which He bears in that day, as we have seen.

The two solemn chapters concerning Babylon (Jer. 50 and 51) are also explained on the principle of which we have been speaking. Desolation has indeed fallen upon that ancient city.

That has exactly fulfilled the word through Jeremiah so far as it goes. But Babylonish corruptions remain, and are reviving, and there is much that awaits a future fulfilment, according to this prophecy, and according to that of Revelation 17 and 18. In the meanwhile, we find in the last chapter of Jeremiah one who was an object of contempt at Jerusalem--Coniah! raised to eminence by Evil-merodach at Babylon. Like many who are unfaithful to God and His people, he is exalted amid the corruptions of Babylon, which was already beginning to sink, in the days of the intemperate Evil-merodach. He was himself afterwards murdered. This was the King who lifted up the head of Jehoiachin, and provided his diet, before whom he ate "all the days of his life" (Jer. 32:31-34). Of Daniel, at Babylon, we read, "He would not defile himself with the portion of the King's meat" (Dan. 1:8); and he represents the faithful remnant, who will be delivered in a future day out of Babylon.

The words of Jeremiah, or rather the words of the Lord through him, have been abundantly proved to be of divine origin, by t

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